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Questions Concerning
the
Transport of Nuclear Waste to Yucca Mt. Nevada

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[redacted]

I. Does DOE have overall responsibility for the transport of all levels nuclear waste?
II. What role does the Department of Transportation play in the transport of nuclear waste?
III. What level of nuclear waste is the subject of transport via the proposed Caliente corridor?
   A. low – e.g., radioactive gloves, tools and even nuclear reactors
   B. high – e.g., used nuclear fuel from power plants
   C. transuranic – nuclear fuel used by the DOE
   D. In what way do these levels differ, especially high vs. transuranic levels
   E. The term "spent nuclear fuel" (SNF) is used in the DOE's "Transportation Strategic Plan". What does SNF mean in terms of the three levels of radioactivity of nuclear waste?
VI. Will any level of nuclear waste ever be transported, by whatever means, through or near the Reno/Sparks area?
V. Will all nuclear waste scheduled for Yucca Mt. be transported solely by rail? If no, then by what other means and by what routes?
VI. Transuranic waste is in the form of hundreds of inert pellets encapsulated in a metal canister designed specifically to contain this type of waste, correct?
VII. In what forms do low and high levels of nuclear waste come?
VIII. Where are low and high levels of waste stored?
IX. How does the transport of low and high level nuclear waste differ from that of transuranic?
X. What physical tests have been performed on nuclear waste canisters to ensure their security?
XI. Other than via normal entry, what might it take to open a canister?
XII. Should the container's security be breached, what happens to the characteristics of the pellets?
   A. Do they remain inert when exposed to air, moisture or other chemicals, etc?
   B. What effect does wind, at what force, have upon the pellets, either in their original state or in some new state? Can they become airborne? Do they roll around on the ground?
   C. Should an explosion occur with enough power to open the canister and vaporize the pellets, what happens to the radiation?
XIII. Is there a limit to the number of canisters that might be assigned to a single train?
XIV. What kind of security is provided to both the canisters and the train itself?
XV. Are there sensors GPS associated, to monitor a specific canister? If so, are those sensors equipped to activate an Emergency Alert System in the immediate area and further down track?
XVI. Is the train itself equipped with GPS sensors and equipped to activate a region's Emergency Alert System?
XVII. Is the track swept for problems or potential attack preceding a train's approach using technology such as SAR (Synthetic Aperture Radar)?
XVIII. What classification of personnel will travel with the train?
   1) Will National Guard RAID teams (Rapid Assessment and Initial Detection) or some federal equivalent, such as the proposed elite security force, either be assigned to the train or be on alert and be close enough during nuclear waste shipments to respond immediately in the event of an incident?
   2) What level of security clearance will be given to train and train/track maintenance crews?

040095

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3) How often will train and track maintenance crews be scrutinized concerning their security applicability?

4) Will personnel accompanying trains be qualified and equipped to deal with an incident thereby containing the spread of radiation and providing antidotes to an exposed populace?

5) Will there be security/emergency response posts positioned along the Caliente corridor?

6) Is there a radiation antidote for animals?

XIX. Is it anticipated that shipments of nuclear waste that pass in close proximity to populated areas will be preceded by an announcement of the day and time of passage? If so,:

A. What kind of warning?

B. What does "close proximity" mean in terms of specific distances?

C. What would be the population number required to receive such a warning?

D. Will the public be notified of the days and times the canisters will be passing their locations?

XX. At what speeds will trains with nuclear waste be allowed to travel?

XXI. Will there be other cargo being transported with nuclear waste and if so how will it be inspected and at what frequency to ensure that it contains nothing to harm the canisters or the train itself?

XXII. How often will the train cars themselves be inspected?

XXIII. Given the present administration's propensity for advocating the use of nuclear energy, is consideration being given to reactivating the nuclear reactors in Northern California and Oregon that are presently decommissioned or, to licensing the building of new plants?

XXIV. So as to build a railroad to Yucca Mt. Via Caliente:

A. Will any state land need to be obtained for the crossing?

B. If state land is to be used, is the state objecting or negotiating. If negotiating what might the quid pro quo be?

C. How much private land will need to be acquired?

D. If private land is needed, but cannot be purchased, does the federal government plan to do a "taking" viz-a-viz eminent domain or some other process?

XXV. What route from the Washington State reactor will the waste take during transport?

XXVI. In the event that the Caliente route is disabled what happens to the nuclear waste?

1) Does it continue to ship but by alternative means and/or routes? If so, what are those alternative means and those other routes?

2) Does it stay where it is, not being transported until such time as the Caliente route is once again functional?

XV. Is there now, or might there be, transport of any levels of nuclear waste, other than that of transuranic level of radiation, by not only the DOE but other agencies of the federal government, via means other than rail, from any locations other than nuclear reactor sites, to any location other than Yucca Mt? For example, from, to, or between sites such as military depots or commercial storage sites, for other than transuranic levels of waste?

XXVI. In the event of an incident involving the transport of any level of nuclear waste who will be responsible for compensation for adverse affects to humans, animals and plants?

2